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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

26 November 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-51: PROBABLE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA
AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF ATTACK UPON YUGOSLAVIA,
THROUGH 1952. (For the consideration of the
Board).

THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable political developments in Yugoslavia
through 1952 and the likelihood of Satellite or Soviet-Satellite
attack upon Yugoslavia, through 1952.

DOCUMENT NO. _____
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☒
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____ 1991
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: SMK REVIEWER: 006514

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DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

NIE-29, "Probability of an Invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951," (20 March 1951), and NIE 29/1, "Review of the Conclusions of NIE-29, 'Probability of an Invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951,'" (4 May 1951), both concluded that "an attack upon Yugoslavia in 1951 should be considered a serious possibility."

Since these estimates were published, the need for an estimate of probable political developments in Yugoslavia and of the likelihood of attack through 1952 has become apparent due to major developments in three factors affecting these issues:

- (1) Increasing discontent within Yugoslavia at the regime's domestic policies, especially among the peasants.
- (2) Continuing increase in the capabilities of the Satellite armed forces.
- (3) Increased economic and military aid from the West to Yugoslavia and the development of a more firm Western commitment to support Tito in case of attack.

II. INTERNAL STABILITY

Peasant Dissatisfaction

1. The principal internal problem confronting the Tito

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government today is the increasing dissatisfaction of the peasants with the regime's domestic policy. This discontent reflects the general dislike of Tito's Communism felt by the great majority of the population. It has increased and become more vocal and effective during the past six months for the following reasons:

- (1) The regime's insistence upon maintaining and developing its collectivization program.
- (2) Compulsory crop deliveries, high taxes, and a "price scissors" which makes purchase of manufactured goods by the peasants almost impossible.
- (3) The government's inability to improve economic conditions or even to offer substantial hope of improvement.
- (4) The peasants' belief that the present status of the West's relations with Tito has improved their political position within Yugoslavia.

2. Peasant dissatisfaction in Yugoslavia is now of particular significance because of the widening disparity between Satellite and Yugoslav military capabilities. Since the bulk of the Yugoslav armed forces consists of peasants or sons of peasants, continued peasant dissatisfaction might weaken the morale of the forces which defend Yugoslavia. Moreover, Macedonia, the area in which opposition to the established collectives is strongest, and Croatia, the area in which dissatisfaction with compulsory deliveries and with attempts

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to establish collectives is strongest, are both particularly sensitive sections for Tito because of their strategic location and because of the religious and political issues which have caused opposition there to Belgrade governments throughout modern South Slav history.

3. Peasant support of Tito's struggle with the Cominform has been consistently vigorous, due largely to the intense nationalism of the peasants. The enthusiasm behind this support has gradually waned, however, as economic conditions failed to improve and as Tito continued to promote his collectivization program. The relaxation in 1951 of some of the more repressive police state measures gave the peasants increased opportunity to express their discontent. Peasant opposition in the summer of 1951 became more militant as Tito gradually developed closer ties with the West. The situation became more serious in the fall of 1951; the cause for this was the government's restriction and even denial of the legal right of peasants to withdraw, with their land, from state agricultural cooperatives on the expiration of their three-year contracts for trial membership.

4. Despite the growth of discontent among the peasants, Tito's government is not threatened seriously by them. Tito's control of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the armed forces, and the security forces is firm. Peasant discontent with the regime is disorganized. Indeed

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all of the anti-Communist elements in Yugoslavia are sharply divided by political, religious, and nationalist rivalries, and there is no evidence of effective organized resistance within the country. Peasant dissatisfaction at most will probably be limited to the refusal to plant in excess of peasant needs and the attempt to withhold food from the market. There is no reason to doubt that Tito will be able to deal with these actions.

Troubles within the CPY

5. The Yugoslav government has revised and softened its tactics in order to conciliate the West and to lessen internal dissatisfaction, although Tito and his regime remain Communist and although the government's control remains absolute. The revisions have consisted largely of conciliatory gestures, such as the "humanization" of relations between the authorities and the population, the relaxation of some controls to correct the more obvious inequities, and the elimination of some corruption and inefficiency from local government agencies. These steps have probably disturbed a few of the rank and file of Tito Communists, particularly since many minor officials have lost some personal prestige and power. Cominform criticism of Tito is likely to have some influence upon a few such minor officials, but there is no indication that the government will not be able quickly to discover and obliterate these. The important Communist leaders are

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not likely to be troubled by what they surely regard as a "temporary retreat." Such tactical adjustments have always been recognized by Communists as compatible with Communist strategy. Moreover, it must be apparent to any Yugoslav Communist who has supported Tito that the likelihood of his survival in a regime controlled by Moscow is exceedingly slight.

Tito's Probable Courses of Action.

6. Tito, with a tottering economy and a poorly-equipped army, faces a wide variety of difficult problems which both require and restrict flexibility and maneuvering. The great majority of the population will remain opposed to Communism and will attempt to derive all possible advantages from Tito's closer relations with the West. The Communist rank and file at the same time may become apprehensive lest Western personnel and ideas infiltrate the Yugoslav Communist state. Tito, who must rely upon his Party, must at the same time avoid antagonizing the Western powers, upon whose economic and military assistance he is temporarily, at least, dependent.

7. It is difficult to anticipate the courses of action which Tito will adopt. Nevertheless, the nature of his dilemma and his policy since 1948 suggest that he will retain the present political and economic system in Yugoslavia and attempt not to antagonize the West. Thus, there is little likelihood that he will increase the rate

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of collectivization sharply within the period of this estimate; he will probably maintain the present ratio between collectivized and individual farms. He will also deal with peasant discontent on a local level, firmly and yet with such discretion that relations with the West will not be impaired.

8. In his relations with the Western powers, Tito will probably make as few political concessions as possible. He will resolutely defend his freedom of action and the sovereignty of Yugoslavia. Thus, he will probably be willing to develop closer economic and military relations with the free nations of Western Europe, but he will probably not join formally any of the groupings now organized or being organized. At the same time, he will no doubt continue to support colonial nationalism against the Western powers.

9. These tactics will probably ensure the internal stability of the Tito regime through 1952, particularly since Tito has and no doubt will retain firm control over the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the armed forces, and the security forces.

III. THE MILITARY SITUATION

The Yugoslav Armed Forces

10. The capabilities of the Yugoslav armed forces have remained approximately constant throughout the past two or three years,

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though the deterioration of Yugoslav material may have proceeded at a rate more rapid than the rate of improvement of morale, training, and staff work. The military supplies thus far provided by the West have been very limited and have consisted almost entirely of light equipment. Current Yugoslav military capabilities are seriously restricted by the following:

1. Insufficient quantity and poor quality of much of the equipment.
 2. Heterogeneity of present equipment, mostly of Soviet and German World War II stocks.
 3. Lack of spare parts and of proper ammunition.
 4. Severe shortage of heavy weapons, particularly of anti-tank artillery, anti-aircraft artillery, and armor.
 5. Inadequate and largely obsolescent air force.
 6. Poor general staff tactics and techniques, particularly in planning and coordinating the movements of large forces.
11. United States military equipment scheduled for delivery under the military aid agreement signed recently is intended to replace the rapidly deteriorating materiel now used by the Yugoslav armed forces and to supply newly organized supporting units. Little of this equipment will be delivered before mid-1952. No real increase of Yugoslav military capabilities can be expected before the end of 1952, since first this equipment must be delivered to the units, the troops must be trained in its operation and maintenance, and staff work must be

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improved. Nevertheless, the morale of the armed forces, which has remained consistently high except in the air forces, has already been improved by the promise of freely-granted Western aid.

The Satellite Armed Forces

12. Yugoslavia's military capabilities, in relation to those of the neighboring Satellites, have declined steadily during the past two years. The ground forces of Albania, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria are now estimated at 495,000 men, organized into 39 divisions, of which 4 are armored and 2 mechanized. These forces have grown in size approximately 50 percent from January 1950 through September 1951, and it is believed they will increase an additional 27 percent by ^{the end of 1952.} ~~the end of 1952.~~ The Kremlin is reorganizing the Satellite ground forces so that they will conform to the Soviet pattern. The Bulgarian army is apparently the most loyal and formidable, with its 13 divisions almost fully equipped with Soviet materiel, reserves stockpiles available, and good morale. The Rumanian and Hungarian ground forces most closely approach the Bulgarian standard.

13. The ground forces of the Satellites adjacent to Yugoslavia are supported by air forces which possess more than 1100 aircraft. These air forces have more than doubled in size since May, 1951, and special emphasis has been placed on ground support aircraft.

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IV. Likelihood of Attack Upon Yugoslavia.

14. The ultimate Soviet objectives in Yugoslavia remain the elimination of the Tito regime, the replacement of this regime by a government subservient to Moscow, and the political, economic, military, and ideological reintegration of Yugoslavia into the Soviet sphere. There is little evidence indicating the priority which the Kremlin has assigned these objectives or the manner in which they should be attained.

15. Factors which could indicate a Soviet intention to attack Yugoslavia during 1952 are:

(1) The capabilities of the armed forces of the Satellites have greatly increased during the past two years. In an attack before mid-1952, the air forces of the adjacent Satellites could defeat the Yugoslav airforce and their ground forces - with Soviet logistic support - could overcome formal Yugoslav resistance and reduce Yugoslav forces to guerrilla warfare in the mountain redoubt area.

(2) The Satellites neighboring Yugoslavia, especially Bulgaria, have attempted to erase any ideological difficulty connected with an attack on Tito by identifying him with Fascism and denying him even an early affiliation with Communism.

16. The increase in the armed strength of the Satellites in the last two years does not, however, necessarily reflect a Soviet intention to attack Yugoslavia during 1952. Satellite military strength would almost certainly have increased substantially during this period even if there had been no Yugoslavia or if Yugoslavia had remained a Satellite. Communist ideology and fear of non-Communist states require the development

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of military strength in Communist states, though not necessarily for immediate aggressive use. There has been no particular sense of urgency demonstrated in the development of these armed forces, especially in coordinating the military activities of the four countries which neighbor Yugoslavia.

17. The Satellite economic program, designed to advance simultaneously the industrial base and the immediate military capabilities of the Satellite area, has created a progressively advancing state of war-readiness. There is, however, no indication that the long-term aims of the economic program are being sacrificed to achieve greater immediate war-readiness. It is estimated that the Satellite armed forces will not complete their reorganization and reach maximum effectiveness until the end of 1952 (Albania not until mid-1954).

18. Current Soviet-Satellite propaganda provides little evidence concerning the likelihood of an armed attack on Yugoslavia within the period of this estimate. The volume of propaganda directed at Yugoslavia has remained constant. Recent propaganda is almost identical in its hostility with that of mid-1948. The mid-1951 declarations that the Yugoslav people "would find a way to freedom" disappeared by September and were apparently only a facet in the general war of nerves against Yugoslavia.

19. Past Soviet actions suggest that the Kremlin considers Yugoslavia as only one factor affecting the general position of the USSR and not as an isolated problem. Consequently, there seems to be little likelihood that

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-11-

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the USSR will take action toward Yugoslavia without carefully assessing the effect such action would have upon its general political and strategic position.

20. If the USSR already is or should become in 1952 fully prepared for general war, it might launch an attack on Yugoslavia. At least initially it seems likely that only Satellite forces would be employed. The Kremlin would probably claim that Yugoslavia had attacked one of the Satellites or might claim that the invading Satellite armies were assisting a group revolting against Tito.

21. It is, however, unlikely that the USSR will attack Yugoslavia unless it is prepared to start a world war. The Kremlin must be aware that even a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia could not be launched without very grave risk of global war. The growing cooperation between Yugoslavia and the Western powers, the US-Yugoslav military aid agreement, the progress of Western rearmament, UN action in Korea, and the growing movement in the UN for collective action against an aggressor has probably convinced the USSR of the danger inherent in such a move. Furthermore, the Kremlin probably realizes that if the attack did not lead to immediate general war, it would have a unifying effect on the West and greatly increase the Western rearmament effort.

22. Additional reasons which might deter the USSR from an attack on Yugoslavia in 1952 are:

(1) It would be difficult and costly in terms of Soviet logistic support.

(2) It would diminish, perhaps destroy, the effectiveness of the Soviet "Peace Campaign", a major weapon in the Kremlin's

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attempt to prevent Western rearmament.

(3) The Kremlin probably realizes that Yugoslavia is not now and cannot become a serious military threat to the Satellites before 1953, if then.

(4) The threat of the Titoist heresy to Soviet control of the Satellites and the international Communist movement has for all practical purposes been checked.

23. Although Satellite military, economic, and propaganda preparations indicate that an attack upon Yugoslavia in 1952 is possible, it is considered to be unlikely unless the USSR is prepared to wage general war.

CONCLUSIONS

24. Although the internal difficulties of the Tito regime will probably increase between now and mid-1952, these difficulties are unlikely to lead to an overthrow of the regime.

25. The most important internal problem of the regime is and will probably continue to be peasant opposition to the collectivization program. Peasant dissatisfaction, which is apparently increasing, may weaken Yugoslavia both economically and militarily but is unlikely to confront the regime with a threat to its existence.

26. Satellite capabilities for an attack on Yugoslavia have materially increased in the last two years. In an attack before mid-1953, the air forces of the adjacent Satellites could defeat the Yugoslav Air

SECRET

-13-

SECRET

Forces. Their ground forces - with Soviet logistic support - could overcome formal Yugoslav resistance and reduce Yugoslav forces to guerrilla warfare in the mountain redoubt area of Yugoslavia.

27. Although Satellite military, economic, and propaganda preparations indicate that an attack upon Yugoslavia in 1952 is possible, the risk of global war or the impetus that such an attack would give to Western rearmament if general war did not result will probably deter the Kremlin from this course of action, unless it is prepared to start global war.

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